

## SOUTHARD NOTEBOOKS

by Jean R. Walton



### Col. Isaac Southard: In his Brother's Shadow

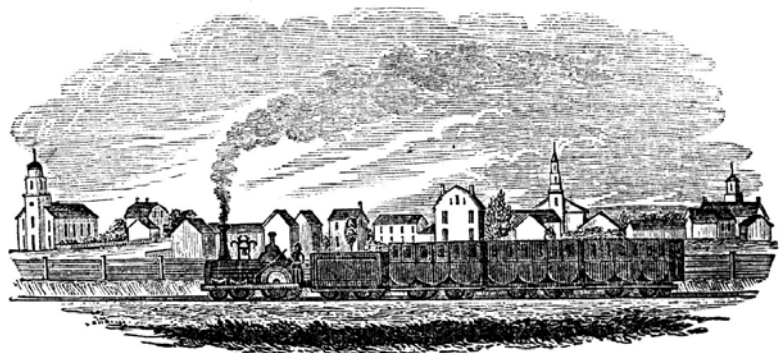
#### Notes

Some of the letters we have included in Southard correspondence are in fact not letters either to or from Samuel Southard, but letters to his brother Isaac. As they seem to give a fuller picture of the Southard family, we continue to include them. There are two here, which we add to the others which we have published in the past.

#### Historical Background

Isaac Southard was a man of some standing in his own right. During his lifetime, he was - besides a businessman - Country Clerk of Somerset County, a Member of the House of Representatives, Treasurer of the State of New Jersey for six years, and a respected and active member of the Democratic Republican, then later Whig party. Isaac was one of a number of sons of Henry Southard, and was born four years earlier than Samuel, in 1783. He grew up in Basking Ridge and attended Finley's Academy, as his brother was to do a few years later. He married Mary Wright Doty of Basking Ridge in 1807, and together they produced eleven children, which are sometimes referred to in letters to Samuel Southard from his family. Isaac's livelihood seems to have depended largely on his Basking Ridge and later Somerville farm, and sometimes shop keeping, in addition to his appointments across the years.

While his younger brother was establishing himself in Flemington, Isaac was appointed by Internal Revenue as collector for Somerset County, where his duties include issuing licenses for various types of businesses. He joined the local militia and by 1817 had risen to the rank of Colonel, by which title he was thereafter most often known.



*Southern View of Somerville*

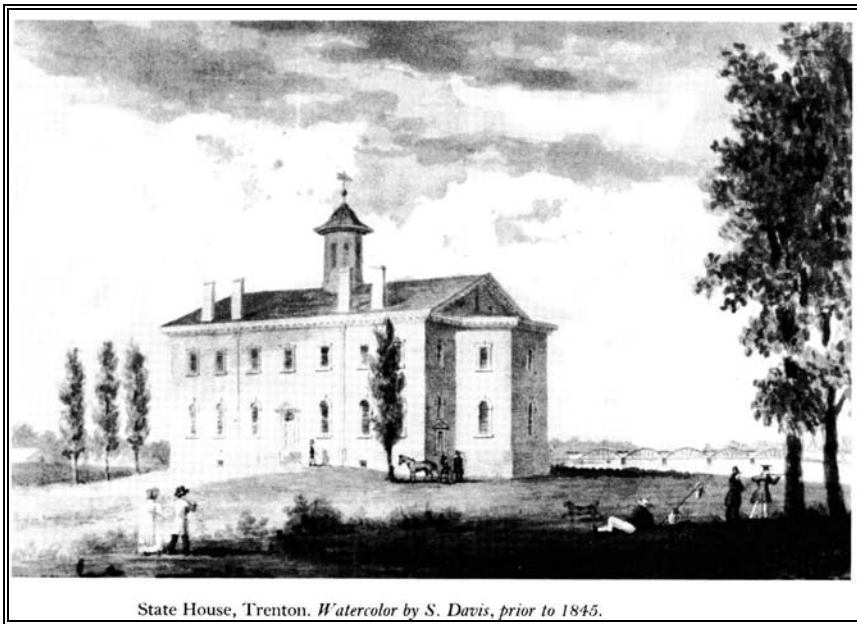
He was appointed one of the lay judges in the Court of Common Pleas in 1820, and also Justice of the Peace. Clearly he was also gaining the respect of others for his skills in accounting, and was a director of the "State Bank of Morris." He bought land in Somerville in 1823, south of Main between Bridge & Union Streets, and the present site of the railroad station there. His politics, like that of his family, were of the Democratic Republican party, and when his younger brother Samuel went to Washington in 1821, Isaac was his eyes and ears in New Jersey, along with several others, including Lucius Q.C. Elmer, Charles Ewing, and David Thompson. Curiously, during the time when Samuel Southard returned to New Jersey at the election of Andrew Jackson, Isaac Southard was elected to the House of Representatives. So

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from the election of Henry Southard to the House in 1801 to Samuel Southard's death in 1842, there were few years when there was not some member of the Southard family in the government in Washington.

One project during this period of Isaac's life was raising money for the Elizabethtown and Somerville Railroad [which became the Central RR of New Jersey]. His appointment to State Treasurer of New Jersey came in 1837. Whether this was chiefly on his own merits, or whether his brother's influence played a role is unclear. What is clear, however is that his brother's position as President and Counsel for the Morris Canal and Banking Company caused him some serious embarrassment. The Company obtained from the Treasurer an extension of payment of taxes, only to later inform him of their inability to pay. What Samuel actually knew of the improprieties of the Morris Canal and Banking Company when he took the position of President in 1837 is also unclear, but these matters were grist for the rumor mills among the opposition party in New Jersey. Isaac continued to serve as Treasurer for six years, until 1843.

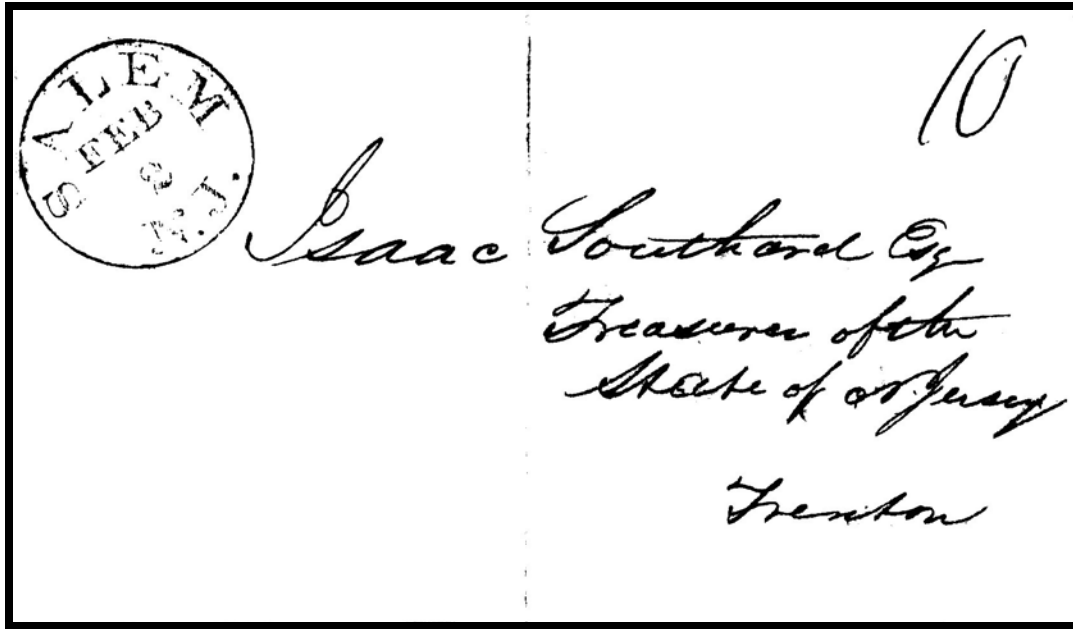
Col. Southard died in 1850, leaving a wife and eight of his eleven children. Names familiar from correspondence are his son Henry; and a daughter Celia who married James Reading; and Daniel, who studied law with his uncle Samuel.<sup>5</sup>



State House, Trenton. *Watercolor by S. Davis, prior to 1845.*

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<sup>5</sup> I am particularly indebted to an article by A. Van Doren Honeyman in the *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, ["Isaac Southard, State Treasurer of New Jersey, 1837-'43" January 1931, Vol XVI, No. 1, pp. 21-34], for this information on Isaac Southard.



Collection of: Joseph Geraci  
Letter addressed to:  
Isaac Southard, Esq.  
Treasurer of the State of N.Jersey  
Trenton

Southard: Feb 2, 1838  
P'mkd: Salem, N. J  
[S4 black/10]

From: John Elwell  
[Noted: Certificate of Deposit/Salem Bank/1838]

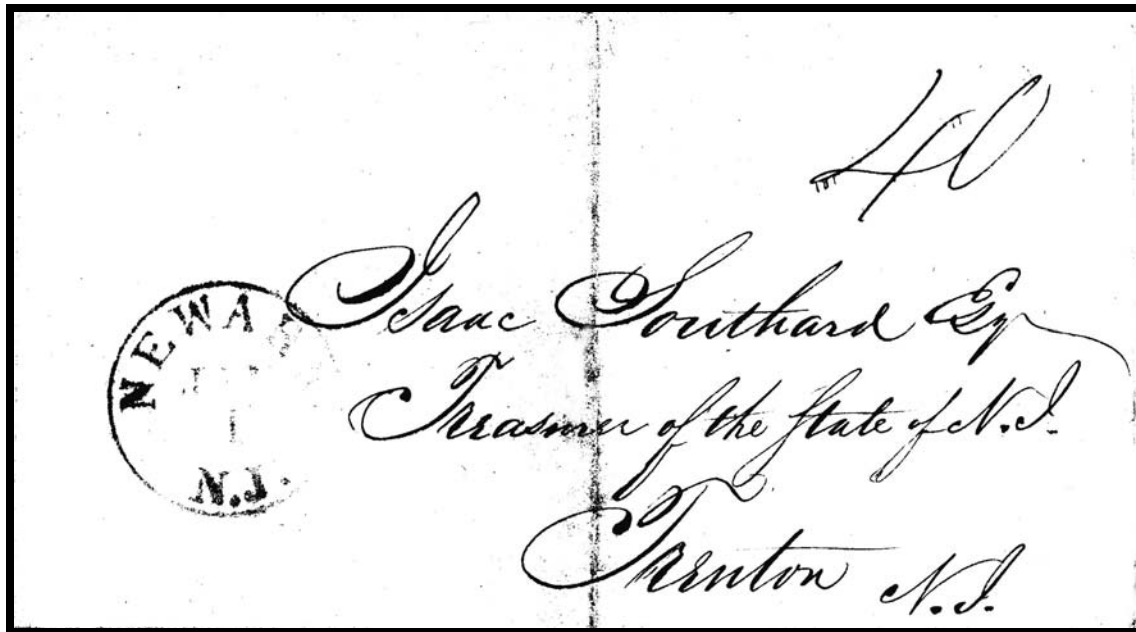
Salem Bank  
Feb 1, 1838

Dear Sir,

I have your favor of [the] 29<sup>th</sup> ult. On or about the fifteenth ult., I forwarded to your address a letter containing answers to the questions propounded by the Governor, also our certificate respecting small notes, and also advising you that I had placed to your credit two hundred sixty-five 22/100 dollars (\$265.22), the tax of our Bank for the last year (for which you can draw through one of the Trenton banks). I presume my letter reached you as I perceive the answers of the bank have been published. Nevertheless as it is a matter of some importance, I herewith forward another certificate corresponding with the form received from you.

I am very respectfully  
Your obt. Ser't  
John Elwell  
Cash'r

Isaac Southard, Esq.  
Treas.



Collection of: Jean Walton

Letter addressed to:

Isaac Southard Esq.

Treasurer of the State of N.J.

From: Matthew Day

[Noted: Certificate/Mech's Bank NewArk/1841]

Southard: Jan. 1, 1841

P'mkd: Newark, N.J.

[N5 - red]

Jan 1/40

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Mechanics Bank

Newark Jan 1, 1841

Isaac Southard Esq.

Treasurer etc.

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed a Statement of this Bank made this day in compliance with an "Act for the better regulation of the Banks of this State and for other purposes.."

Your account has credit on the Books of this Bank Twenty five hundred Dollars (\$2500), amount of tax on our Capital for 1840.

I am very respectfully

Your Obed't Serv't

Matthew W. Day, Cashier